



## DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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### Pupil Transportation Section

# Memorandum

To: Everyone Interested in School Transportation Safety  
From: Rodney D. McKnight, Supervisor, Transportation Services  
Date: January 20, 2005  
Re: School Transportation Safety Awareness



Students typically gain access to education by traveling to and from school in a variety of ways, including walking, in passenger cars, on bicycles or skateboards, and on the familiar school bus. A national report released in June 2002 affirmed, "school buses represent the safest way for children to travel to and from school and school-related activities." Even so, "stop-arm" violations have been, and continue to be, a serious threat to students either waiting for, getting on, or getting off the school bus.

On January 10, 2005, a unique Idaho special interest license plate became available (49-419D, Idaho Code). The new plate is designed to continuously remind students and the motoring public that: 1) it is against the law to pass a school bus while stopped to load or discharge students, 2) school buses are the safest form of transportation and 3) "Student Safety Awareness" is everyone's business.

Funds from the sale of the new license plate will be used to purchase new "Buster" buses and training videos. Buster is an excellent tool for training students about school transportation safety. Revenues from the sale of the new special interest license plate will also be used to develop curriculum that school districts can use with Buster training, including "Safe Routes to School" training. Use of Buster will be limited to individuals that have been properly trained and certified. While we may never know the ultimate benefit of this new program, logic suggests that lives will be saved as a result of this new initiative.

The Idaho State Department of Education encourages everyone interested in student safety, especially educators, school bus drivers, parents and grandparents, to purchase this specialized license plate(s). School districts are also encouraged to license their school buses with this new special plate (continues to be exempt for public owned school buses). School bus licensing is a reimbursable expense to districts that own and operate their own school bus fleet. The following information should be helpful:



An initial program fee of \$35 (one-time fee for exempt plates) will be charged when the plate is first purchased. Each subsequent renewal program fee is \$25 (no renewal required for exempt plates). The program fee is in addition to all other applicable annual registration fees, county administrative fees, and plate fees.



This new license plate may be displayed on passenger vehicles, light trucks with a combined gross vehicle weight (CGVW) up to 26,000 pounds, motorhomes and camper trailers. Horse, car and cargo trailers with living facilities are excluded from displaying the plate.



Special program plates can also be personalized with up to five letters and/or numbers (at least one letter is required). The cost to personalize the plate is \$25 (one-time fee for exempt plates), which is in addition to both the special program fees and all other required annual registration and plate fees. There is an additional \$15 per year renewal fee for a personalized plate (no renewal required for exempt plates).



District owned school buses that are used exclusively to transport students and have a combined gross vehicle weight (CGVW) of 60,000 pounds or less may display the special interest plate. However, it may be necessary to personalize the special plate because of a five-letter/number limitation. If a district owned school bus has a current exempt plate with five or less positions assigned to it, that number can be assigned to the special interest plate. If a district owned school bus has a current exempt plate with six or more positions assigned to it, it will be necessary to personalize the special interest plate for that vehicle; however, personalized plates are required to have at least one alpha character and cannot duplicate any other plate program configuration. For example, a district might try using a district acronym followed by a unique number or lettering scheme, e.g., M9910 (Meridian School District bus numbered 99-10) or CDAAA through CDAZZ (allows up to 676 unique plate numbers for Coeur d'Alene School District). School district should develop a scheme that provides maximum flexibility for growth and has an optimal chance of not duplicating any other plate program configuration. Any combination of letters and numbers (up to five) may be tried.



Commercial operators of intrastate school buses with a CGVW of 26,000 or less can be issued standard sequential numbered plates through their local county auto-licensing office. Commercial intrastate operators of school buses over 26,000 pounds should contact their local county auto-licensing office first. If the county office does not handle the heavier commercial vehicles, the registrant will need to register at the ITD One-Stop-Shop (OSS). Most commercial operators will already be registered and if their county does not register the heavier commercial vehicles, they should already be familiar with the OSS operations. This category of school bus would be issued an available standard sequentially numbered plate (0001W-9999W) Intrastate and student use limitations apply to all commercial buses over 26, 000 CGVW.



Private-school buses owned by a private, not-for-profit school, will be registered as non-commercial buses; however, intrastate and student use limitations apply to buses registered at over 26,000 CGVW. These buses can be registered at local county auto-licensing offices. This category of school bus would be issued an available standard sequentially numbered plate.



Building principals, parent-teacher-student organizations and individuals can make one-time purchase(s) of sample or vanity versions of the Idaho School Transportation Safety Awareness plate from ITD for \$30. Sample plates can be personalized at no additional cost. These plates cannot be displayed on motor vehicles, but they can be displayed in buildings, used in special student/driver educational training programs, or given to family and friends as unique gifts.



Sequentially numbered Idaho School Transportation Safety Awareness license plates are only available at local county assessor offices. Personalized and sample plates are only available by mail or fax from the Idaho Transportation Department Division of Motor Vehicles office in Boise. All future renewals for Idaho School Transportation Safety Awareness license plates will be processed at local county auto-licensing offices.

Please, help care for and protect Idaho's future. Support and promote "Student Safety Awareness" in Idaho and contact your local county assessor office, auto-licensing office, or the Idaho Transportation Department Special Plates Section in Boise (334-8649) for additional special plate licensing information ([www.itd.idaho.gov/dmv/](http://www.itd.idaho.gov/dmv/) - follow the links). Together we make a difference.

Hi, I'm Buster. Remember to be safe. I'll see you soon!

